

## AMOUS DAWSON IS NEARING END

Nearly Exhausted—People Are Deserting the City.

(M. J. Brown)

Dawson City mining man lay dying on the ice; he didn't have a woman nurse, he didn't have the price; at a "sour dough" sat beside him, his dying eyes to close; he listened to his dying words and watched him—while he froze.

It is like stuff that gives the people the impression that the Klondike country is a great ice plant. They think of it as they think of the awful cold of Siberia—as a country of terrible storms, of intense cold and where only the hardest can survive. And I found the city with a temperature of about 65 and everything balmy as an Oregon summer.

But I arrived in Dawson in summer. There are only two seasons in Dawson—winter, July and August. The boat landed us in the night—just at night item, for there is little darkness in midsummer north of 60. I went ashore at about 3 o'clock, and for three hours I walked the streets, the length of one and back the other, as if I was like a cemetery. And as I passed cabin after cabin in the residential section, on street after street, I realized that the most of Dawson could never stir again—for there were none to stir it.

Cabin after cabin was deserted, blocks of them in strings. Many had the doors and windows broken, roofs were falling in. There a big log hotel of two stories stood vacant, with the booze signs recalling the old gold mad days. A carpenter shop with the work benches as the owner left them; a vacant store building, a big dance hall where once men and women, drunken on both booze and gold, took part in revels that were equaled nowhere on earth; and so on, street after street, with abandoned homes, business places and shops.

I remember of hearing passengers on the boat say, "Dawson is very quiet," "Dawson is on the bum," and his expressions, but I had no idea Dawson was as sick as she was. I read she was past help—dying.

Then the sun, after a three hours' rest, got back on the job, and what was left alive of this most famous mining camp on earth began to stir and ask for nourishment. Smoke began to come out from the roofs of a few of the homes; the saloons, restaurants and business places began

to open, and what was left alive of the gold city opened for what business was yet breathing.

Five years from now there will be no Dawson—nothing but deserted buildings.

The reason is the gold has played out. The once richest dirt ever known has been panned, rocked, sluiced and dredged about clean. And when once the yellow stuff is cleaned out men leave the diggings as rats leaving a sinking ship.

In 1896 "Togish Charlie," an Indian, while fishing at the mouth of the Klondike river, found some large gold nuggets in the sand and showed them to a trader. Investigation showed the valley, the stream bed and the mountain side were full of the yellow metal, and soon the news of the wonderful strike went up the river and to the outside.

The men went mad. They poured up to Skagway from Seattle by boat, went over the White Horse pass, thousands and thousands of them, month after month. They came with their outfits, very few of them knowing anything about the terrible White Horse and Dyea trails over the mountains, and the more to be dreaded White Horse rapids after the pass had been made.

There were no steamers on the Yukon then. If it was summer the men went down in boats and on rafts—or anything that would float. In winter they went down on the ice. Many who went by boats were caught by the ice before they reached Dawson and were frozen in, and many who went down on the ice in the winter were caught in the break-up and found death in the Yukon rather than fortunes in the Klondike, while the rapids claimed many a life and outfit.

There were pilots at the rapids who would take boats through the whirlpool for \$30 apiece, at owner's risk, but there were thousands of men who had put their last dollar into outfits and they had to do their own steering.

A business man in Dawson, one of the first to reach the Klondike, was a passenger on our boat into Dawson, and he told me many interesting stories of the mad rush. He said he remembered one man in particular. He came in from Seattle with a boat and a good outfit and the rapids got them. He got ashore and at once started back for Seattle, for another. The second time a pilot took the boat through and lost it. Then the owner put a gun to his head and ended it all—as hundreds of others did.

But notwithstanding the terrible

obstacles thousands and thousands reached the Klondike fields and went mad with the gold fever. Everywhere along the river the ground was rich with precious metal. Men fought for it, killed for it and died for it. Gold was rich in almost every foot of ground. Great fortunes were made in a few weeks and fabulous prices were paid for claims.

Then Dawson sprang up and became a roaring, crazy hell.

Today it is dying a natural death.

Only a few men are working claims now—a pitiful few of those who came too late and who are picking the bones. After the claims gradually played out, the Guggenheims put dredges in and took untold wealth out of the river. They are yet working, just marking time for the finish.

Two and a half years ago a well-equipped outfit went into the unmapped wilds northwest of Dawson. They went with supplies for three years. Nothing has been heard of them since. Some figure they must have made a strike or they would have returned, but old prospectors, the old "sour dough" boys, shake their heads and say the expedition is either a failure or the men have perished.

I talked with an old-timer about it one night and he said in his 20 years in British Columbia and Alaska he had never known a strike to be hushed.

"When they make a strike they stake, work it for a while, then some of them come in," said he. "I never knew it to fail. They want to start a stampede. They want company, want the rush to come and a camp to follow. Of all the God-forsaken lives white men ever lived, that of the prospector is the worst."

There is hardly a building in all Dawson that sets level. When they were built they were plumb and square enough, but they are built on ice, and the succeeding summers have heaved them and twisted them until one would think an earthquake must have jarred the whole city.

Under a mid-summer sun that works a shift of about 20 hours a day, vegetation springs up everywhere and grows wonderfully fast and luxuriant, and one almost doubts the ice box stories told of the Klondike. But dig down three feet and the ground is frozen solid. It has been frozen so for centuries and it never will thaw until the climate of Alaska changes.

Almost anywhere along the Yukon from White Horse to Nome, gold can be panned from the river bank. It can be panned from nearly every

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canyon and creek. It can be found in sufficient quantities to make day wages. Gold seems to be almost everywhere in Alaska. But places that could and would be worked in California or anywhere else are worthless in Alaska, for the reason that the expense and hardships are too great.

One might make wages for three months sluicing on the river, but what is he going to do the other nine months? The ground is not rich enough to pay for the expensive winter thawing process, one cannot take out enough during the three months to live on the other nine.

The day of the gold pan, the sluice box, the rocker and the windlass and bucket has said good night. The future mining in Alaska will be by hydraulic, quartz mills and dredging, and the outlook is none too bright for even these big business propositions. With the exception of Juneau, every mining proposition I have so far seen or heard about is running out, and the companies operating them are quitting them.

An old-time miner told me that in Ogilvie mountains, northeast of Dawson, he had some of the richest quartz claims that laid out of doors. "I have had many assays made; I have plenty more samples or I will take any man to the mine and let him pick his samples," said he. "It is richer than the Treadwell ever was," he continued, "yet it isn't worth a dollar. I couldn't give anyone my claims if they had to do the assessment work on them. When I made the strike I thought at last I had found my luck. And I can't give it away." The reason of this is the great expense of putting in the necessary mill equipment to run such a mine.

NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY.

S. M. Mann & Co., Bankers, a corporation, Plaintiff,

vs.

Elmer J. Smith, and Agnes W. Smith his wife, C. L. Bullard and Ethelyn N. Bullard his wife, Fred J. Vance and Salome Vance his wife, Defendants.

By virtue of an execution issued out of the above entitled Court in the above entitled cause to me directed, and dated the 20th day of August, 1917, upon a judgment order and decree, and order of sale, rendered and entered in said Court on the 27th day of July, 1917, in favor of S. M. Mann & Co. Bankers, a corporation, and against the above named defendants, for the sum of Twelve Hundred Dollars, with interest thereon at the rate of eight per cent per annum from the twelfth day of June, 1916, and the further sum of One Hundred Dollars Attorney's fees, and the costs of and upon this writ, commanding me to make sale of the following described real property, to-wit:

All that portion of the Southwest quarter of the Northeast quarter of section two, township three north, range two west of the Willamette Meridian, lying south and west of the right of way of the Portland, Southwestern Railroad Company as the same is now located, excepting therefrom the right of way of the said Portland and Southwestern Railroad Company, as the same is now located, also excepting a strip of land adjacent to the right of way of the said railroad now owned by Gus Rudeen as the same shall be located after the transfer between said Gus Rudeen and Elmer J. Smith shall be recorded, the said strip containing about two acres more or less.

Now, therefore, by virtue of said execution, judgment order and decree and order of sale, and in compliance with said writ, I will on Saturday, the 22nd day of September, 1917, at the hour of eleven o'clock in the forenoon, at the front door of the Court-house in St. Helens, Columbia County, State of Oregon, sell at public auction (subject to redemption) to the highest bidder for cash in hand, all the right title and interest which the above named defendants or either of them had on the 6th day of June, the date of the mortgage herein foreclosed, or since had in or to the above described property and every part thereof to satisfy said execution, judgment order and decree, interest, attorney's fees, costs and accruing costs.

Dated at St. Helens this 23rd day of August, 1917.

E. C. STANWOOD, Sheriff of Columbia County, Oregon.

By CHAS. BROWN, Deputy.

36-5

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